

Briefing: Greater Manchester set to provide 'world class' solution

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On 26th January 2007 Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA) agreed to the appointment of a consortium made up of Viridor Waste Management Limited and Laing Roads Limited (Viridor/Laing) as the preferred bidder for the authority's waste services contract.

The contract will provide waste services for handling the 1.4 Mt of municipal waste that is generated each year in the conurbation. The 25 year contract is generally acknowledged to be the largest waste services contract to be let in western Europe. It involves £330 million of investment in new infrastructure and is estimated to be worth around £3 billion. Financial close for the contract is due for December 2007.

The plans include the following.

- (a) Four public education centres.
- (b) A major overhaul of the current network of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) including a new site and creating modern facilities, many of which will be at 'split level'.
- (c) Two new 'clean' materials recovery facilities (MRFs) to sort the metal, glass and plastic recyclable materials and to bulk up paper and card that is collected by local recycling services. The facilities will employ the latest sorting technology, including screens and optical sorting, to ensure high quality materials are sent to market for recycling. The MRFs are to be provided by Peterborough-based PPS Recovery Systems Ltd, which has previously designed and built similar facilities, including a 90 000 t per annum capacity MRF at Costessy, Norfolk, UK that opened in 2004.
- (d) A new mechanical biological treatment (MBT) and anaerobic digestion (AD) plant and similar new facilities to replace existing treatment processes at other sites. Two organisations will be providing the five MBT/AD plants. Enpure Ltd has operational facilities in Belgium, Germany and Italy, including a 150 000 t facility at Verona, Italy, that opened in 2002. Clarke/Haase has a number of MBT/AD facilities operating in Germany, including a 150 000 t facility that opened at Lubeck, Germany, in 2006.
- (e) Four new enclosed ('in vessel') composting (IVC) facilities to treat garden and kitchen waste will be provided, looking to

produce around 125 000 t of compost per annum. They will be built by Lancashire firm TEG Group plc. Waste that cannot be recycled or composted will be treated in MBT plants using AD technology. AD processes generate electricity (renewable power) for export to the National Grid through the production of methane. The Greater Manchester plants hope to generate circa 5 MW of power directly and will also produce a solid recovered fuel (SRF), thereby diverting other waste from landfill and offsetting fossil fuel consumption.

- (f) The continued use of two garden waste facilities.
- (g) Major refurbishment or the creation of new transfer loading stations (TLSs).

GMWDA has also confirmed its intention to supply SRF to a combined heat and power facility as a part of its future municipal waste solution. After maximising recycling and composting GMWDA's contractor would be responsible for both the production and the use of the refined fuel product that can be produced from the remaining waste that cannot be recycled or composted. The SRF supply will be moved by rail transport to a facility that is proposed at the Ineos Chlor petrochemical plant in Runcorn.

GMWDA is investing heavily in the new equipment to ensure that Greater Manchester is 'world class' in its handling of municipal waste. With the help of householders across the conurbation they now recycle a quarter of their waste and want to increase that to 50%.

It is also seeking value from the 50% of waste that cannot be recycled or composted and to slash landfilling of residual waste from 65% to 15%. AD and the production of a refined fuel product can help reduce the demand for imported fossil fuel and reduce the environmental consequences of using it.

GMWDA is very keen to see the new facilities in place as quickly as possible and recognises that government is introducing new financial incentives on renewable energy and is keen to see some of those benefits flowing to Greater Manchester taxpayers.

The total contract cost is expected to be £1 billion less than was expected to be paid over 25 years. This cost saving arises from a

number of different sources such as: the competitive procurement process reducing expected profits; better guaranteed income for recyclates and energy than expected; efficiency savings in the way materials are transported; costs

associated with the project finance are less than expected; and it is anticipated that the volume of waste that the contractor will have to deal with in future years is less than feared because of waste minimisation initiatives.

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